



In Good Taste

**UPDATE FROM NCDA&CS FOOD DISTRIBUTION DIVISION
FALL 2008**

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DIRECTORS MESSAGE

Starting a new school year always seems to bring new challenges. For us it seems the USDA commodity program is riding a roller coaster. We started out the school year with knowledge that a third of our commodity orders were going to be pushed back past November 15, 2008 due to lack of funds to purchase all items ordered. Then comes the Farm Bill which pumps millions of dollars into fruit and vegetable purchases for commodities. The deadline imposed on USDA by the Farm Bill to spend a large sum of money in a small window of time was almost impossible to do, so they began to switch entitlement fruit and vegetable orders over to Bonus. So if you will look at your 209 Report, I am sure you will see these transactions. For instance all of the A232 Bulk Potatoes that we ordered for 2008-09 for further processing were changed from entitlement to Bonus. The switching from entitlement to Bonus is good, although it may not be the fairest way, because everyone did not order the same items therefore some districts will be less affected than others. But this is the hand we were dealt and so we have to play it. We were hoping that as orders were being switched, and we noted our state entitlement was growing quite rapidly; we anticipated we would have a good pot of money left for schools to go back in and order more commodities. Our bubble was soon burst as USDA began to make purchases of other entitlement items and the money started dwindling away. This was due to increasing food prices. USDA is struggling to make purchases due to high prices and finding vendors to bid.



So here we are in October and we still don't have a clear picture of the commodity program. I would ask that you look at your 209 Report every month and monitor the progress of your orders. We will do our best to hang on for this roller coaster ride.

MAXIMIZE YOUR COMMODITY VALUE AND USAGE

You are probably fully aware that prices for USDA commodities continue to escalate. This causes your commodity entitlement dollars to support less of the costs of your school's lunch and breakfast programs. We understand the impact this is having on operational costs. Here are some helpful tips that can help you maximize your commodity value and usage:

- Commodities are real dollars. Know your planned assistance level (commodity entitlement) and order the total value.
- Be aware of your State's ordering, processing, procurement, storage, and delivery options to help you make good choices in managing your commodities.

- Do an annual procurement plan based on your menus. Order commodities to meet your menu needs to maximize the use of commodity dollars. Commodities should complement your menu to allow you to maximize your participation.
- Be aware of the value of commodities and compare them with your commercial prices.
- Make the most of your entitlement dollars. Order some bulk commodities for processing to get a lower cost per pound. This enables you to stretch your commodity dollars.
- Minimize storage and warehousing costs by:
 - Ordering wisely across all commodity groups. Don't put all your eggs in one basket!
 - Moving all commodities quickly through your distribution system.
 - Negotiating ordering and delivery schedules with processors.
- Track your entitlement throughout the school year, and know if there are opportunities to order more commodities.
- Become a partner with your State Distributing Agency to ensure the most cost effective ordering, distribution, and delivery system.

School Programs Commodity Update Volume 12, Issue 4

www.usda.gov/fdd/commodityfoodfacts.htm

USDA COMMODITIES...

HEALTHY CHOICES, AMERICAN GROWN WEBSITE

Commodity foods have improved dramatically over the past few decades, but public perception is still framed by myths and inaccuracies. To set the record straight about commodity foods, FNS' Commodity Image Team has created a new website to offer many resources to provide both accurate and timely information about the USDA commodity programs and commodity foods. This new website has resources for school nutrition professionals, the media, and parents. Users can find a variety of factsheets, recipes, talking points, and other resources with information about commodities. The new website can be accessed at: www.commodityfoods.usda.gov, by clicking on the new logo. The School Nutrition Association has posted a link to this information as well.



DID YOU KNOW?

... USDA sets high food safety standards for commodities. The commodities USDA specifically purchases for its nutrition assistance programs must meet food safety standards set by federal regulatory agencies and USDA's two purchasing agencies - the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Farm Service Agency. At USDA food safety is taken very seriously and standards are set high because of the vulnerable populations, such as children and the elderly, participating in USDA's nutrition assistance program.

USDA COMMODITY LABEL REDESIGN

FNS's Food Distribution Division has finished a complete redesign of USDA's commodity labels for canned fruits and vegetables, updating them to look more like their commercial counterparts.

The use of commercial labels has always been a vendor's option. We encourage vendors to use commercial labels where possible. In fact, for Group B commodities, all vendors are using their commercial labels. Using commercial labels may help to reduce delivery delays, increase competition, lower program costs, and eliminate the stigma of inferior products.

While most Group A commodities such as frozen poultry and meats (includes tray pack chicken and ground beef) are commercially labeled, there are many reasons why some vendors still use USDA labels. Some small companies only pack for distributors or food chains so they don't have their own label (this is very common with fruit and vegetable canners). A few of our specifications are different than the commercial product (e.g., lower salt than the commercial). For these reasons, many vendors that pack our canned fruits and vegetables do not have their own commercial label.

As we continue our efforts to improve the image of our commodities, the labels also need to properly reflect the high quality of the food inside. For those vendors who do not use their own labels, the redesign of our canned fruit and vegetable labels accomplishes the following:

- Improving Perceived Quality – Even though commodity products are of high quality, current USDA commodity labels give an impression of low quality.
- Conforming to Commercial Standards – The current two-color labels on low-quality paper with simple graphics are not as eye-catching or appealing as their commercial counterparts. They foster the negative impression that USDA products are generic.
- Responds to Customer Preferences – Commodity program recipients have indicated they prefer USDA commodities in commercial labels, or commercial-like labels, over the current USDA commodity labels.

These new USDA labels for the canned fruits and vegetables will begin to be available on commodity products in the fall of 2008.

School Programs Commodity Update Volume 12, Issue 4

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FARM TO SCHOOL NEWS

Food Distribution has gotten off to a great start with our new and improved Farm-to-School Program. Upcoming items are as follows:

- Week of November 3rd Red Cabbage, Green Cabbage, Broccoli Crowns, and Sweet Potatoes.
- Week of December 8th Red Cabbage, Green Cabbage, Broccoli Crowns, Sweet Potatoes, and Pink Lady Apples.
- Week of January 12, 2009 Apple Slices.
- Week of February 23, 2009 Sweet Potato Sticks.
- Week of March 23, 2009 Apple Slices.

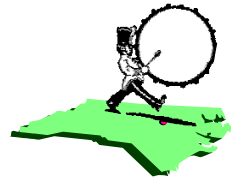


Food Distribution will offer strawberries and blueberries in the Spring to close out the school year. We pickup all NC Farm-to-School items over the weekend and deliver to your school warehouse, produce distributor, or commercial distributor - whichever is your preference. If you have any questions call Ted Fogleman at 919-575-4490 or email ted.fogleman@ncagr.gov

2008 MARCH ACROSS CAROLINA

Plan to attend this commodity processing show to learn what's new in processing. All of the items featured on the State Processing Bid will be featured and available for sampling.

We will be marching from the coast to the mountains. This year's training sessions will discuss the Basics of Commodity Processing and will include information on the Statewide Processing Bid. See schedule below:



Tuesday, November 4, 2008 - Riverfront Convention Center, New Bern, NC
Wednesday, November 5, 2008 - Dorton Arena, NC State Fairgrounds, Raleigh, NC
Thursday, November 6, 2008 - Hickory Metro Convention Center, Hickory, NC

If you have not received a confirmation email for your registration, please let us know!
You can email Beth Cox at Beth.Cox@ncagr.gov.

2008 NCDPI FALL CONFERENCE

NCDA&CS Food Distribution Division will be participating in the 2008 Fall Conference for Child Nutrition Programs for directors and supervisors. The conference, sponsored by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Child Nutrition Services Section, is scheduled for October 22-24 at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel and Convention Center in Research Triangle Park, N. C.

Gary Gay will be holding an Advisory Council Meeting for council members on Wednesday October 22, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. in the Crown Room. On Thursday October 23, Gary will participate in a group discussion on SFA's responsibilities during Food Recalls. During the General Session on Friday, Gary will give a Commodity Update filling you in on the latest USDA news.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Tidbits

USDA COMMODITY ACADEMY

Please mark your calendar for February 11 and 12, 2008 for Food Distribution's training for new Child Nutrition Directors and Supervisors. We will release more information about this training as the time draws near. We look forward to another group of graduates from the USDA Commodity Academy.

WEB BASED SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT



What is Web Based Supply Chain Management? This is the name of the new computer system that USDA is rolling out to replace ECOS. This system is in the development stage and targeted roll out is early 2010. Stay tuned for more updates on this matter.

AMERICAN COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION ASSOCIATION

The American Commodity Distribution Association Annual Conference this year is in beautiful Costa Mesa, California May 2-5, 2009. I would ask that you join us this year to hear about the latest in commodity programs. Our own Gary Gay is planning this year's conference and will be installed as President of this organization. We would love for you to attend. If you need further information about ACDA, please contact Gary at gary.gay@ncagr.gov

NEW FDD STAFF MEMBERS

We would like to introduce to you four new team members all based in the Butner office.

Rosemary Elliott joined Food Distribution in June. She came to us from Food and Drug Protection Division as an Accounting Technician II. She tracks the finances for the division.

Chris Gresham joined our team of professional drivers in August. You will be happy to him see drive up with those wonderful USDA commodities as he is our new truck driver.

John Williford joined us in August as our new stock clerk. John's responsibilities include picking the orders and loading the trucks.

Beth Cox joined the Field Services section in August. She will be working supporting Bob, Allison, and the field staff.



Honorable Mention Evans Road Fire

NCD&CS Food Distribution Division drivers Johnny Ellis (left) and Kenny Beal (right) deserve an honorable mention for their work at the Evans Road Fire in Eastern North Carolina. This fire was caused by lightning on June 1 and burned into August consuming over 40,700 acres.

Both men volunteered for a 10 day assignment, working 12-14 hours per day. Their responsibilities included driving water tenders spreading water over rough trails throughout the area.

We appreciate them and their dedication to service to North Carolina.

GAIL WEAMS RECEIVES STATE AWARD



Gail Weams was recently selected with 12 other recipients, to receive the State's highest award, The Office of State Personnel's Award for Excellence. State Personnel Director, Thomas H. Wright notified Gail in August by his letter congratulating her for being chosen for this distinguished honor because of her outstanding service to the State of

North Carolina. Mr. Wright and Governor Easley applaud her for her excellence in public service. She will be honored at a ceremony in October.

Gail was also honored at the 2008 Women's Expo at the Haywood Park Hotel in Asheville on October 2, 2008, as one of "The Ten Outstanding Women You Should Know in Western NC for 2008". Local radio station listeners nominated local women who inspired them and deserved recognition. As a result, Gail was selected by the stations staff for her accomplishments in public service within the community.

Gail has also received the Department of Agriculture Commissioner's Award for Excellence in Public Service. Gail received this award from Commissioner Steve Troxler during a Division Head meeting in May 2008.

Congratulations Gail!

DATES TO REMEMBER

Here are several dates for you to mark on you calendars:

October 13-17, 2008

National School Lunch Week

October 16-26, 2008

NC State Fair
State Fairgrounds
Raleigh, NC

October 22-24, 2008

NCDPI Fall Conference
Sheraton Imperial Center
4700 Emperor Blvd.
RTP, NC 27703

November 4-6, 2008

March Across Carolina

January 25-28, 2009

SNA-NC 2009 Industry Seminar
Grove Park Inn, Asheville, NC



February 11-12, 2009

NCDA&CS Food Distribution Division
Commodity Academy
2582 West Lyon Station Road
Creedmoor, NC 27522

N.C. Food Distribution Advisory Council
Active Membership List

<u>Name and Address</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Term of Office</u>
336-570-6080 336-570-6680 Fax Ms. Sallie Ange Alamance-Burlington School System 1712 Vaughn Road Burlington, NC 27217-2916 001-00-000 PES E-mail: Sallie_Ange@ABSS.k12.nc.us	Executive Child Nutrition Director	July 1, 2006-June 30, 2009
704-873-2175 704-873-5640 Fax Ms. Trish Campbell Iredell-Statesville Schools 1147 Salisbury Road Statesville, NC 28625-6296 049-00-000 PES E-mail: trishcampbell@iss.k12.nc.us	Child Nutrition Director	July 1, 2006-June 30, 2009
336-599-2191 336-599-1549 Fax Ms. Lyn D. Holt Person County Schools 304 South Morgan Street, Room 25 Roxboro, NC 27573-5245 073-00-000 PES E-mail: holtl@person.k12.nc.us	Child Nutrition Director	July 1, 2006-June 30, 2009

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012-00-000 PES
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910-253-2876 Fax
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252-534-4631 Fax
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Northampton County Schools
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Jackson, NC 27845-0158
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919-776-4954
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704-986-6694
Ms. Alison Francis Child Nutrition Director July 1, 2007-June 30, 2010
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828-488-3129
828-488-8477
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828-766-2221

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252-946-6183

Mr. John Hastings

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Division of School Support

NC Department of Public Instruction

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NEWS ABOUT FINANCIAL AUDITS



We received the following notification from USDA about the deletion of CFDA#10.550 (Code of Federal Domestic Assistance) which your auditors have been using to show the value of commodities received from NCDA&CS Food Distribution:

“It has recently come to our attention that 10.550, Food Donation, has been deleted from the Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). Although this was done without FDD input or knowledge, we have long felt that 10.550 was redundant (and even misleading), as it simply included a general description of USDA food donation in the various programs, each of which have their own citation in the CFDA. The primary purpose of the CFDA is for organizations (or individuals) to determine which types of Federal assistance or programs they should apply for. However, auditors sometimes referenced 10.550 in doing commodity audits at State distributing agencies or recipient agencies, and its deletion has generated some questions. If you receive such questions from auditors, or others, please assure them that the deletion of 10.550 does not reflect any change in donated food distribution in any of our programs, and refer them to the appropriate CFDA citation for the specific program or programs for which their activities would apply. The CFDA citations for programs in which donated foods are provided are as follows:

NSLP (National School Lunch Program)	10.555
CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program)	10.558
SFSP (Summer Food Service Program)	10.559
CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program)	10.565
FDPIR (Food Distribution on Indian Reservations)	10.567
TEFAP (Emergency Food Assistance Program)(administrative costs)	10.568
TEFAP (Emergency Food Assistance Program)(food commodities)	10.569”

You may want to pass on this information to your financial office.

ACRONYM LIST

ACDA	- American Commodity Distribution Association
ECOS	- The Electronic Commodity Ordering System
FDD	- Food Distribution Division

FNS - Food and Nutrition Service
FY - Fiscal Year
NCDPI - North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
SFA - School Food Authority
SNA - School Nutrition Association
SY - School Year
USDA - United States Department of Agriculture
WNC - Western North Carolina

For more information go to: <http://www.commodityfoods.usda.gov>

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Gary W. Gay Director of Food Distribution
Bob Sitton.....Editor/Administrator for Field Services
Allison MedlinPublisher

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